

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
January 21, 2020

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Deborah Dean, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Nick Fleming. Councilor Toby Jaramillo and Councilor Michael Olguin were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 21, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. January 6, 2020

Before the Council meeting, Councilor Salome requested that the minutes be amended. The minutes were amended and a new copy was provided to the City Council. Councilor Salome explained the changes he recommended.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 20-01-21a – Surplus Equipment

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 20-01-21a which, if approved, deems a 1990 Pierce Arrow Aerial (VIN 4P1CA01G8LA000310) as surplus equipment. Mayor Bhasker stated that this was the first ladder truck ever purchased by the City of Socorro for the Fire Department.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-01-21a. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution No. 20-01-21b – Acceptance & Approval of the FY19 Audit

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, presented Resolution No. 20-01-21b which, if approved, accepts and approves the completed audit report and findings (none) for FY 19.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-01-21b. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Hicks stated that the City met with the airport's engineers, Molzen-Corbin, last week. Councilor Hicks stated that the City's airport does have a five-year plan. Mayor Bhasker stated that the sweeper for the airport comes in on February 7th. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City did not receive funding this cycle for runway improvements.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's lobbyist is attempting to get appointments for the City during the legislative session. Mayor Bhasker stated that any appointments will take place on Friday, January 24, 2020. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Councilors are welcome to attend any of the appointments.

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Mayor Bhasker stated that two of the City's requests for funding include new dispatch radios and new software for City Hall. Mayor Bhasker stated that another project, the reconstruction of Bullock Avenue, will cost approximately \$4.5 million. Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that the City needs to choose projects for the LGRD, MAP and Co-Op applications. Mayor Bhasker stated that he got a request to meet with the senior center director but that he would like to wait until after the legislative session to meet.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Jim Dewey Brown, Tourism & Rodeo Director, stated that the rodeo season will begin with the Benjamin Memorial Roping event on February 15-16. Mr. Brown stated that after that, there will be something at the arena nearly every weekend from March to November. Mr. Brown stated that September 19th has been chosen as the date for the next chile taste-off event. Mr. Brown stated that he and Felipe Romero will be attending a chile symposium in Las Cruces in February. Mr. Brown stated that the previous food vendor at the arena has not renewed his contract with the City and multiple food trucks will now be able to serve the arena.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout with Police Department stats from December 2019. Chief Winders stated that he has been working with the Finance Officer to budget two new police cars for the next fiscal year. Chief Winders stated that one of the police cars was hit by another vehicle. Chief Winders stated that the other party's insurance has paid for the damage and the car will be fixed soon. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is trying to hire police officers. Mayor Bhasker stated that Albuquerque Police Department came to Socorro and left recruitment cards at the Socorro Police Department.

Mayor Bhasker stated that there is a large pay discrepancy for dispatch employees that will need to be changed. Lupe Tarango, Dispatch and Animal Shelter Director, stated that the dispatch office has been very busy. Mr. Tarango stated that in regards to the animal shelter, there was a transport recently to Utah and there will be another transport to Utah again later this week.

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons reviewed the handout. Library events include: Preschool Story & Craft Time, Battle of the Books, Teen Science Café, Adult Book Club, Family Yoga and the Preschool STEM Program. Ms. Lyons stated that the heater in the main room was repaired and there was a small, new roof leak on the 3rd floor. Ms. Lyons stated that the library has spent \$14,800 on materials (books, e-books, audio, DVD's) and \$8,500 on subscriptions.

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that youth basketball currently has 158 participants. Ms. Rivera stated that the renovations of the restrooms is ongoing. Ms. Rivera stated that men's basketball starts March 2nd and adult co-ed volleyball starts March 3rd.

Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that the water project on Bullock Avenue has about 700 feet left (to California Street) and that all the side streets have been tied in. Mr. Silva stated that crews will be working on the intersection of Bullock and El Camino Real to locate all of the utilities. Mr. Silva stated that crews continue to work on repairing utility cuts and potholes. Mr. Silva stated that crews put up 51 new stop signs. Mr. Silva stated that crews have dug all of the trenches at the Convention Center for water, sewer and electric lines. Mr. Silva stated that crews are starting a curb and gutter clean-up project on 6th Street. Mr. Silva stated that the water truck is out for repairs.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill & Recycling Department Director, stated that the landfill has been busy and is shorthanded by 2 laborers. Mr. Lucero stated that the dozer is out for hydraulic leak repairs.

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Mr. Lucero stated that there is only one residential garbage truck operable right now and the two commercial trucks are up and running. Mr. Lucero stated that crews continue to collect cardboard from businesses and deliver new dumpsters. Mr. Lucero stated that prep work is being done on the new cell at the landfill.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that in regards to the Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC) v. City of Socorro, the City's attorney filed a motion to dismiss today. Mayor Bhasker stated that SEC's argument is that the City is violating a franchise agreement. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City and the SEC do not have a franchise agreement. Mr. Pineda stated that there should be movement in February on the SEC v. Public Regulation Commission (PRC) case. Mr. Pineda stated that he will be installing new GPS units into City vehicles. Mayor Bhasker stated that City staff met with a wifi vendor. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City was unable to apply for a Reconnect Grant because Century Link is stating that they have 25 mbps up and down in the City of Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City disagrees with that and will be sending out a survey to City residents in order to prove that they do not have 25 mbps. Mayor Bhasker stated that surveys will be sent in the utility bills and will be on the City's website. Mayor Bhasker asked residents to complete the survey to show how many mbps they are getting. Mayor Bhasker stated that Century Link only has to prove one person has 25 mbps but the City will have to show that 450 people are getting less than that. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will miss the funding cycle because of this but will have the data for the next funding cycle.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that the Fire Department is fully-staffed and all equipment is currently up and running. Chief Gonzales stated that classes for department staff are ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that he is waiting to hear if the City received a grant for a new ambulance. Mayor Bhasker stated that the legalization of marijuana in New Mexico is a topic being discussed at the legislature. Mayor Bhasker stated that if it is legalized, he hopes the State provides sample policies to help guide entities. Mayor Bhasker stated that entities will need help classifying certain employees into safety-sensitive and non-safety-sensitive positions. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is also concerned how it will affect police officers, firefighters and dispatchers. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the legalization is approved, the City would have to amend its substance abuse policy.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, stated that the next utility bills will include the natural gas and sewer increase. Ms. Lopez stated that Tyler Technologies will come to Socorro in February to review Finance Department current practices/processes. Ms. Lopez stated that the collection agency the City uses closed so she is searching for a new agency. Ms. Lopez stated that budget meetings will start at the end of February. Ms. Lopez stated that cross-training in the Finance Department is ongoing.

Carlos Savedra, Transportation Manager, stated that the department hired a new temporary employee January 1st but that the employee has already had to leave the position. Mr. Savedra stated that he completed two interviews for drivers. Mr. Savedra stated that he has been busy learning his new position. Mr. Savedra stated that the Magdalena route ended as of December 31, 2019.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that when considering the MAP project, to please keep Bagley, Center, Lucero and Padilla Streets in mind. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has done work on those streets in the past. Mayor Bhasker stated that a MAP project has to be an arterial or high traffic area to qualify.

Councilor Dean stated that she received an e-mail from Nancy Ortiz who requested a speed bump and light on Lopezville Road between Hilton Hills and Calle de Lago.

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OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will meet with Guzman Energy. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may get a letter of intent from Guzman Energy later this week. Mayor Bhasker stated that he does not want to move forward with the project until the SEC v. City of Socorro case has been resolved.

a. Personnel Changes

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the personnel changes as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Agusta Amaro-Lucero - 1-26-20 – Dispatch - Resignation

Chris Gonzales - 1-1-20 – Transportation - Promotion to Lead Driver - D-30 to D-32

Tony Silva - 1-15-20 – Sanitation - Termination

Temporary New Hires: Scott Crespín, Josh Gonzales, Durwin Padilla

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Taylor Saavedra, Enrique Robles, John Armijo, Steven Chavez, Jilberto Chavez, Sheree Torres, Casandra Trujillo

Student Workers: Matthew Guzman, Autumn Martinez, Bryan Peters, Brandon Esquivel, Carlos Gonzales

Referees (2)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

American Barber and More - C-2 - 216 S. California Street - Darlene Lujan - Barber Shop/Salon

Quilt It Ya Ya, LLC - Out of Town - Aztec, NM - Mary Craig - Retail – Quilt Store

Wind on Wheels LLC - R-1 (Approved by P&Z) - 1010 Lopezville Road - Paul Fuierer - Land Sailing – Instruction, Equipment Rental, Special Events

Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 149563 to 149796 in the amount of \$792,344.73, plus Payroll Transfers (\$335,343.26), for a total of \$1,127,687.99. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

ATTEST:

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk